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## **First Human Cases of West Nile Virus Reported in Milwaukee County**

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has been notified of the first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) infection in Milwaukee County in 2005. This is the first case of WNV in Milwaukee County since 2002 when nine (9) individuals were infected. This current case involves an adult who resides in the City of Milwaukee, and has received supportive care for the infection. The total number of human cases reported in Wisconsin residents to date is six (6) from five (5) counties – Dane (2), Buffalo, Marathon, Jefferson and Milwaukee.

The MHD and the Wisconsin Division of Public Health have not identified any additional cases, clusters or outbreaks of WNV infection in humans. WNV infection patterns in other regions of the country have typically involved elderly persons or individuals with underlying medical conditions or those with a weakened immune system. The WNV virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire the infection when they bite birds carrying the disease.

WNV was first detected in Wisconsin during the summer of 2001 when a bird tested positive for the virus. In 2005, 45 birds have tested positive for the virus in Wisconsin. In addition, the City of Milwaukee Health Department has enhanced surveillance activities including mosquito testing, implemented mosquito population controls through larviciding, and has asked area hospitals to report suspected human cases of WNV to the health department.

There is no vaccine to protect from WNV infection. However, only a small fraction of individuals bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus will experience noticeable illness. A much smaller fraction of these will become severely ill or require hospitalization. To avoid WNV infection in areas where the virus has been detected in mosquitoes, birds or other animals, public health officials recommend the following:

- Use mosquito repellant containing DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- Avoid outdoor activities during peak mosquito activities (dawn and dusk)
- Wear a long sleeve shirt and long pants when outdoors
- Repair screening of doors and windows to discourage unwanted entry of mosquitoes
- Eliminate areas of standing or stagnant water in and around the home (flower pots, buckets, cans, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, bird baths, tires, etc.)

For more information on WNV, citizens can call the City of Milwaukee Health Department's Informational Hotline at 286-3616 or log on to [www.milwaukee.gov/wnv](http://www.milwaukee.gov/wnv).

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